



¶ By the King.

¶ A Proclamation for abolishing of
abuses, by Billes of Conformity.



Hereas diuers Billes of complaint, commonly called, Billes of Conformitie, haue of late yeeres been exhibited into his Maiesties Court of Chancerie, and other his Courts of equitie, by sundry persons against their Creditors, of purpose to enforce them, either to accept lesse then their iust debts, and dammages, or to giue longer dayes or times of payment and forbearance, then the said Creditors were willing to doe, pretending inhabilitie & non soluenencie, sometimes by reason of sodaine and accidentall losse and dammage, sometimes by suertiship, sometimes by euill debtors, and sundry other suggestions and pretences, tending to no other end or purpose, but to defeat or delay their iust and honest Creditors of their due debts and dammages: which Billes haue beene exhibited, sometimes by the debtors alone, & sometimes by the debtors and some of their Creditors by consent, or conuiniencie betweene them: And vpon such billes diuers Decrees, Orders, and proceedings haue passed, to the great dammage of the Common wealth, for that thereby hath ensued as well the imboldening of Debtors not to pay their debts in due time, whereby many men haue beene disappointed, and not able to keepe their credit with others, to their extreame detriment, as also the encouraging of wilfull Bankrupts, and deceitfull persons, and the scarcity of money (being the measure of all bargaines and contractes betweene man and man) together with a general hinderance of trade, & traffique, & many other inconueniences, which by reason of this late and dangerous inuention of Billes and suites of conformity haue happened, as by due and iust examination (for the reformation of so great an euill, and for his Maiesties honour) hath beene found out, and resolved by the house of Commons in this present Parliament: all which inconueniences by the saide Billes and suits of conformity haue increased more & more, sithence his Maiestie (out of his Princely prouidence) hath taken a more exact and carefull course touching Protections, then had beene formerly accustomed; whereby many and great delates of payment of debts, and dueties, and of other iust causes of suites haue beene auoided, which in former times had beene occasioned by some kinds of Protections.

His Maestie (of his blessed disposition for the weale of his Subjects) being careful to stoppe the current of this growing euill, vntill vpon mature deliberation, an exact and full remedy may be prouided by Parliament in that behalfe, Doth hereby signifie and declare his most gracious will and pleasure, and doth expressly charge and command, That all and euery Judge & Judges in the sayd Courts of Equity, where such Billes of conformity doe depend, for so much of the matter in those severall Billes conteyned as concerneth such conformity as aforesaid, and for and concerning all such persons, parties to those Suits, which haue not consented thereunto, shall forthwith, absolutely dismisse the same, and that the said Defendants in such suits be not bound or pressed to any further attendance in that behalfe. And that all Orders, Sentences, Decrees, Injunctions and other restraints or Procees whatsoever grounded vpon any such Bill or Suite to the prejudice, hurt or hindrance of any Creditor or Creditors (not hauing consented as aforesaid) and the execution of the same, be from henceforth fully and wholly suspended, and not to be put in execution vntill order and prouision by some Act of Parliament, for a perpetuall reformation thereof bee had and taken in that behalfe. And that no Bill or Suite of the effect or nature aforesaid be hereafter receiued, accepted or allowed in the sayd Court of Chancery or other Court of Equity, vntill some such order as aforesaid bee taken in Parliament. And that all and euery person and persons now being in prison, or restrayned of liberty, or standing vpon Bond, Bayle or Mainprise, by or by reason of any such Order, Sentence, Decree, Injunction or other restraint, (and for no other cause) vpon any Bill or Suite of the effect or nature aforesaid in any of the said Courts of Equity whatsoever, or by reason of any proceeding thereupon, bee forthwith by the sayd Judge and Judges of the sayd Courts of Equity, set at liberty and freed from his and their imprisonment or restraint, and be discharged of his and their Bonds, Recognizances, Bayle or Mainprise for appearance, without molestation, vexation or trouble for or by reason of any such Order, Sentence, Decree, Injunction, Restraint, Bond, Recognizance, Bayle or Mainprise vntill such further order be taken in Parliament as aforesaid. And therefore his Maestie doth authorize and require aswell the Lord Chauncellor of England, as all other his Maesties Judges and Iustices, & other persons whatsoever, hauing any place of Iudicature, & all and euery his Officers, Ministers and Subjects that now bee or hereafter shalbe, to see and cause this his Maesties pleasure duely with all conuenient expedition to be put in execution.

Given at Our Palace of Westminster the one and thirtieth day of March, in the nineteenth yeere of Our Reigne of Great Britaine, France and Ireland.

God saue the King.

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M. D C. XXI.